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ABSTRACT

Intended for use with business and industry personnel, the training module is part of a kit designed to demonstrate how individuals with disabilities and older persons can be assimilated successfully into the labor force. This module explains how a public relations program can facilitate the integration of persons with special needs into the workplace. It offers key personnel in business and industry a series of action steps to institute a program to integrate persons with special needs. An introduction explains how to use the module, providing information on desired competency of participants in the training sessions, target audience, instructional objectives, materials needed, instructions for executives, and instructional sequence. Individual sections have the following titles: "Human Relations Factors--Inside and Outside the Corporation; "A Common Mission"; "Beyond Good Intentions"; "Accurate Awareness"; "Building Awareness Within the Corporation"; and "Conclusion." 15 references. (DB)

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Module IV

Inside and Outside the Corporation: Human Relations Factors

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INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CORPORATION: HUMAN RELATIONS FACTORS

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Successful Job Matching and Job Placement Systems for the Developmentally Disabled and the Older Worker

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Lois Rood
Floyd Waterman

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of
Human Development Services

Assistant Secretary
Washington DC 20201

While serving as Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, I had the opportunity to develop an Employment Initiative Campaign for employment of workers with disabilities. I am pleased to say that our campaign goals have not only been achieved, but exceeded. This success is due to the dedicated efforts of Governors' Planning Councils, various government committees and commissions, and, most importantly, employers who share our vision of economic self-sufficiency for all Americans with special needs. We have come a long way; more persons with disabilities are working but we still have far to go.

In the next century, the public and private sectors must work together toward a better transition for people with developmental disabilities from special education programs into the world of adult challenges and opportunities. Work provides not only financial benefits, but therapy; it contributes to self-identification and self-worth and is an economic necessity for most of us. The Employment Initiative offers great challenges and opportunities for developing and implementing creative approaches to this transition.

Researchers at the Center for Applied Urban Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, found that many myths and stereotypes exist. They found that labels such as "disabled" and "older worker" sometimes create barriers to employment for these workers who have job skills but who also have special needs. Their investigation into the employment programs serving both individuals with disabilities, and older persons, revealed the need for closer cooperation between the public and private sectors. While some employers fear that accommodations will be elaborate or expensive, they are often very simple and inexpensive. Frequently, the employee can identify the best solution to the problem.

A vast and valuable pool of individuals with special needs are available and qualified for work. Although training materials exist to explain how employers can meet legal requirements, few provide specific information about developing partnerships between employers and human service agencies to tap the resources of workers with special needs. These materials will be useful to employers and will foster a job match that creates good business.

Jean K. Elder

Jean K. Elder, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary
for Human Development Services

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MODULE IV

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CORPORATION: HUMAN RELATIONS FACTORS

How To Use This Module

The purpose of this module is to explain how a public relations program can facilitate the integration of persons with special needs into the workplace. It shows that persons with special needs have skills and experiences of worth to businesses and industries.

A few words of explanation will save the reader time and should clarify the purposes and uses of this instructional module. The authors assume that readers have read Modules I, II, and III, and the Introductory Guide. This module identifies a series of action steps that a company might use to institute a program to integrate workers with special needs.

This module is designed for key personnel in business and industry who have made a commitment to hire persons with disabilities and older workers. It outlines a public relations campaign that will help facilitate the integration of persons with special needs into the corporate structure.

The human relations factor is significant. Persons with special needs bring their own skills and experience into the business world. Their contributions will be greatly enhanced when they are accepted and supported like other employees. Thus, the authors specify expected outcomes, identify sources of additional information, and prepare readers for using the module.

Competency:

Readers will be able to identify the two factors that lead to successful implementation of plans to hire workers with special needs: Commitment at all levels within the organization and the ability of people to work together toward a common goal.

Target Audience:

Key personnel in decisionmaking positions in businesses, industries, and human service agencies.

Instructional Objectives:

The manager will:

- Discuss and acknowledge that employers and workers with special needs desire the same outcome--work for pay with a steady output of a specified product or service.
- Explain the contributions that employees with special needs will bring to industries and businesses and the contributions that corporations will make to employees.
- Identify the steps necessary to build within the corporation awareness of the desirability of hiring persons with special needs, and identify the accommodations that may be needed to promote optimal work.
- Explain the importance of developing a company philosophy that values excellence and expresses concern for the well-being of all employees.
- Identify the steps needed to build an internal program for educating all employees about employees with special needs.
- Explain the procedure for developing a corporate campaign about workers with special needs to be used outside the corporation.
- Discuss the steps necessary to resolve conflicts that may arise.

Materials Needed:

Company executives should review this module carefully. A review of the accompanying videotape, "Job Match: Together Good for Business," would be helpful, as would a review of the audio-cassette tapes. To maximize use of this module, executives should review all of the modules in this series. A listing of excellent resources regarding older workers and persons with disabilities are included in *Business Practices and Resources*.

Instructions for Executives:

Key executives should read this module and review the other modules, the audio-cassette tapes, and the videotape included in this kit. Seminar rooms should be large enough to accommodate the planning group, employee discussions, and small group discussions.

Instructional Sequence:

This module provides an outline for corporate executives to use to integrate workers with special needs into the work force and to promote acceptance of these workers by able-bodied workers. It can be used as the corporation's springboard for discussion and development of an action plan.

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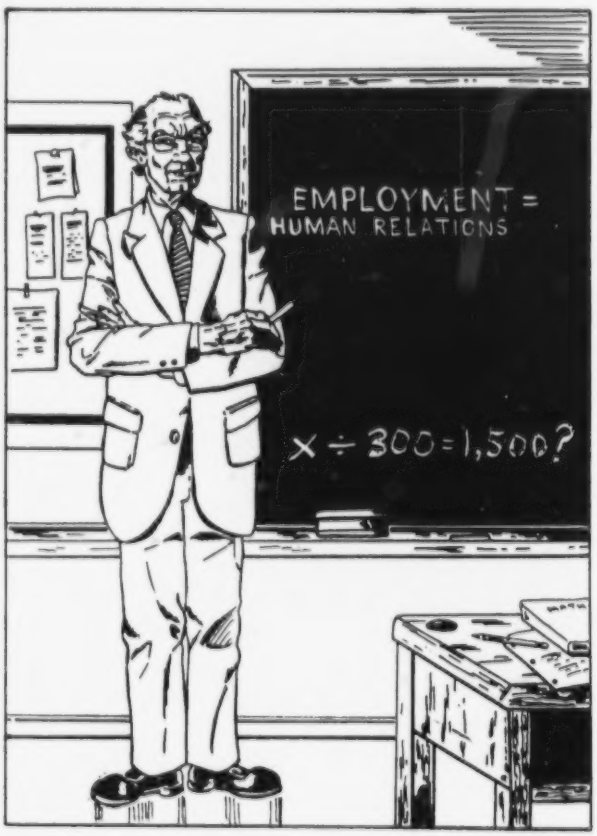
Human Relations Factors: Inside and Outside the Corporation

Theodore Bergeron
Karen Faison

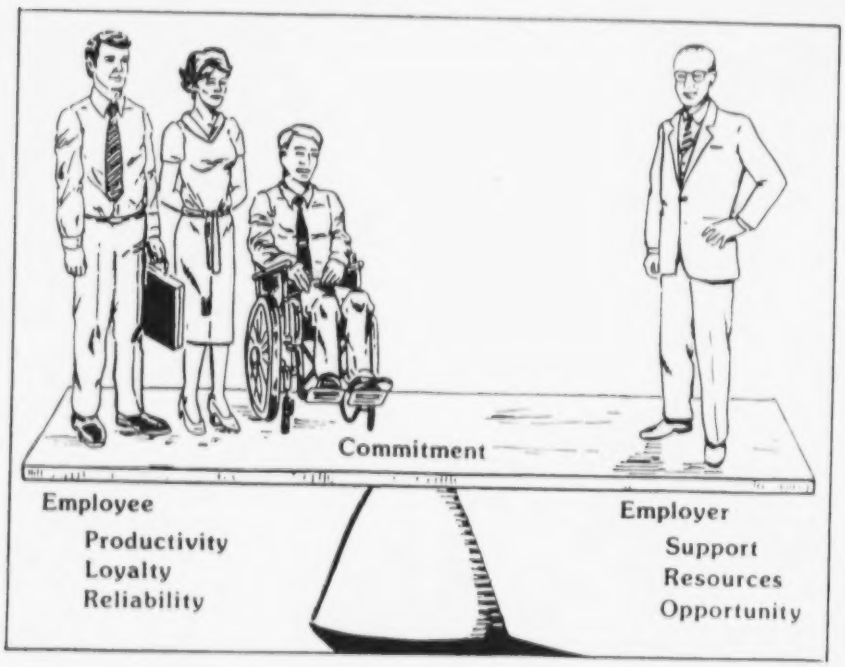
It is challenging to rearrange the sides of an equation while maintaining equality. A considerable amount of skill and creativity are required. Individuals with special needs who seek positions in the workplace present some new variables for the employment equation. The opportunity to identify these unknown variables is at hand. The equation is written: Employment = Human Relations.



Build a Team

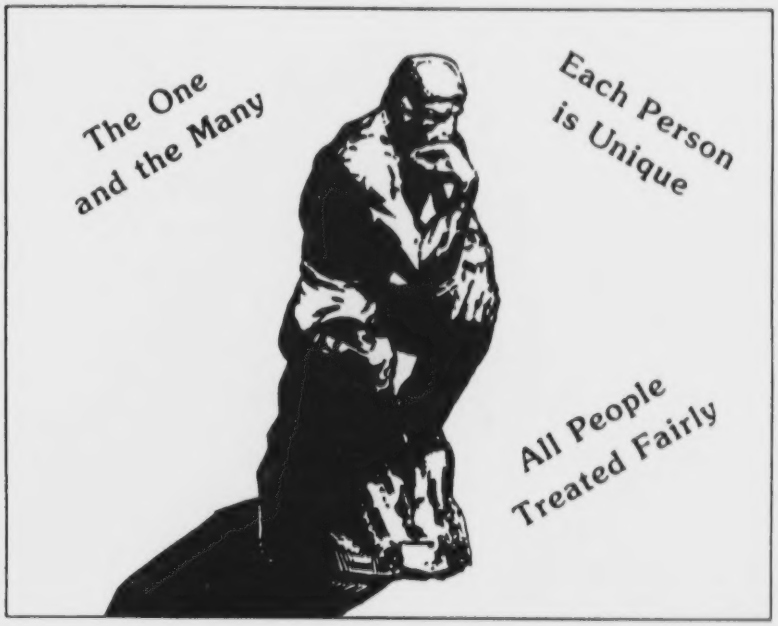
The human relations concept has immediate appeal to most employers. It can be achieved, in great part, by using existing resources. Human relations experts can reduce conflicts and increase productivity. Sometimes the methods become standardized and miss the focus on the individual. This module focuses on human relations programs that maintain and value each employee individually.

The employer contributes resources and support for the employee, and the employee offers an equal commitment. Mutually supportive, they balance the human relations equation.



One and the Many

Each employee plays a role in the overall business structure. Establishing acceptance by coworkers is especially important for individuals with special needs. When each employee is valued, the work environment is conducive to cooperation. The solution to the problem of the "one and the many"--a concept Greek philosophers wrestled with for centuries--is now evident in its simplest form. The employer respects the needs and wants of each employee and trusts that universal fairness will follow.



Decision at the Top

A firm commitment to hire workers with special needs, must be made by a company's top managers. Frequently, this decision involves changing company guidelines to broaden the work force. The following strategies can be used.

Competitive Employment

- The corporation may decide to adopt an affirmative action plan to hire workers with special needs, racial minorities, and women. This plan of action usually allows for a slow but sure assimilation of workers who differ from most workers. When assimilation takes place gradually, new workers may be accepted quite readily by their peers.

Supported Individual Employment

- Occasionally, workers need short-term or long-term assistance to perform various job functions. This form of supported work is performed by company employees who teach work tasks. In some instances, a teacher from a rehabilitation agency remains as long as support is needed.

Crews and Enclaves

- The business or industry may, on the other hand, decide to use a mobile work crew or an enclave in industry program. Crews and enclaves consist of small groups of workers with special needs and a job coach working in an industrial setting. Companies usually use these models when there is a predetermined amount of work to be done. Workers with severe employment limitations who require long-term support and assistance have the capabilities to meet production needs. These employees are paid according to their production rate. In the past, this work may have been completed outside corporate buildings in a facility such as a sheltered workshop. Today, it is more feasible to bring the workers with special needs to company facilities. This could result in a sudden influx of workers with special needs into the regular work force and may require an adjustment period for other employees.

Flex-time or Job Sharing

- Some corporations retain and rehire older workers. Flex-time and job sharing may be used to allow workers with special needs flexibility in their work schedules. Flex-time allows workers to vary their work hours, and job sharing allows two individuals to share the responsibilities of one job.

Deliberate Approach Required

Employees with special needs can have a very positive effect on the company. They can enhance the corporate image and increase the understanding of coworkers. Assimilation of workers with special needs should be planned, and a deliberate approach should be used to build an awareness of the capabilities and needs of these new employees.

A Common Mission

The challenge facing employers is introducing workers with special needs to the corporate system. These new employees function as any others, to generate profits. Tokenism and acts of charity are not part of the human relations equation. Workers with special needs are in the job market because they have the same needs as other workers and want to perform work for the same rewards.

Employers can devise ways to accommodate individuals to maximize productivity and pay regardless of whether they require flexible scheduling and adaptive equipment. Again, equal treatment is a necessity, or it will be obvious that the relationship is artificial.

Job Satisfaction Is Very Important

Job satisfaction is as important to the worker with special needs as it is to other workers. Workers need increased control over work conditions, the ability to function as team members, relationships with coworkers, equitable pay, and the ability to perform interesting and complex tasks. These requirements provide the basis for a comprehensive human relations plan.

As the company complements its work force by adding workers with special needs, fairness to all employees should be emphasized.

- Everyone deserves the respect that comes with knowing that a job is being done well, according to the needs of the employer.

- All employees deserve the right to be comfortable on the job, that is, to have the facilities to perform the job correctly and to be treated with consideration as participants of the work force.

- All employees deserve the right to be paid for the work they perform.

Beyond Good Intentions

Meet the Needs of the Company

A company's decision to hire workers with special needs demonstrates a commitment to produce goods or services with an integrated, capable work force. Employees are hired because they are able to meet the needs of the company. In the past, it was thought that young able-bodied workers exemplified ideal employees. Recently, employers have found that workers with special needs exhibit qualities that are integral to the company's success. These qualities include longevity, competence, reliability, flexibility, and loyalty to the employer. On the other hand, workers with special needs receive equitable pay and benefits and the satisfaction of performing a job well.

Accurate Awareness

Before any education program can begin or any business can be approached, a uniform philosophy must be established. The importance and equality of each worker, able-bodied or disabled, must be established and acknowledged. This philosophy will then extend beyond the business and corporate world into the community. Unfortunately, the potential of people with special needs has been hidden, and the ultimate public relations awareness campaign has yet to be designed.

Importance of Each Worker

Different approaches are required in different situations. For example, placements in competitive employment differ from supported employment, work crews, and enclaves. An individual who is working competitively may only need support in the form of occasional cues from coworkers regarding social expectations in the work environment. More assistance than is required could be nonproductive.

A crew or enclave may require heightened awareness on the part of the business manager. If the crew or enclave is located in a retail setting or in a business with a transient clientele, the group will create its own image. If it is part of a large industrial complex, however, the enclave might benefit from an expanded awareness campaign by the employer.

Pay According to Productivity

If a crew or enclave is established, other workers must know that members of the crew are being paid according to the amount of work they produce. Most persons in an enclave require support and assistance for some time. Older workers might split jobs or work on flex-time, but they are only paid for the work they accomplish.

Building Awareness within the Corporation

Draft an Awareness Campaign

Creating awareness of the capabilities and needs of workers with special needs may be as simple as acquainting new personnel with seasoned workers. However, if the corporation has made a commitment to hire workers with special needs, a specific campaign should be drafted. A step-by-step approach to organizing an awareness campaign follows.

Step I

Schedule a planning meeting for the corporation's decisionmaking personnel. Explain the company's commitment to hiring personnel with special needs and the need for the awareness campaign.

Formalize Corporate Image

- Consider establishing a desirable corporate image. It should:
  - -- Emphasize nondiscriminatory hiring practices;
  - -- Enhance awareness of the cooperation and the competency that prevails within the company; and
  - -- Maximize efficiency and productivity, using the talents of all workers.
- Identify and seek solutions for problems created by the presence of a greater number of workers with special needs.

Identify and Solve Problems

- -- Stop using inappropriate terminology to describe persons with special needs.
- -- Recognize that myths and stereotypes may inhibit the progress of workers with special needs; make a conscious effort to dispel them.
- -- Make a commitment to provide accommodations to improve worker efficiency.

Step II

Build the awareness campaign.

Philosophy Statement

- Explain the corporate philosophy in a statement that expresses concern for the well-being of all employees. Involve key personnel and board members in the development process.

Newsletter

- Develop an in-house education committee which receives support from the personnel director, the training director, and appropriate division directors. The committee should:
  - -- Publish an in-house newsletter which includes articles about:

- Successful employment of individuals with special needs in other locations
- Appropriate and inappropriate terminology
- Accommodations with specific examples from individuals within the work force.

Workshops

-- Conduct workshops for supervisors and employees that explain the changes within the work force, and try to dispel any stereotypes the staff may have. Examples of stereotypes include concern about the ability of persons with special needs to arrive at work on schedule or to perform the same amount of work as other workers for the same pay. As the training sessions progress, discussion should focus on the integration of newer employees into the work force.

Team Approach

-- Encourage the development of a team approach so all employees participate in the awareness program. Ask for campaign suggestions, encourage employees to join in the planning process, and offer bonuses for successful adaptations that simplify jobs. As line-level staff become involved in the awareness campaign, they will develop a greater commitment to hiring persons with special needs.

-- Coordinate a planned effort to involve employees through:

Advocates and Mentors

- Worker advocacy programs. Worker advocates help workers with special needs learn company policy, establish relationships, and become self-sufficient.
- Mentor programs. Mentors teach workers with special needs the tasks and responsibilities of a specific job. A bonus may be appropriate for mentors.

- Develop an awareness program to extend outside the business or industry with the help of appropriate personnel.

Develop Outside Awareness Program

  - -- Publish articles in trade journals explaining successful adaptations and accommodations, job restructuring or job simplification or both.
  - -- Develop displays for trade fairs; include photos and information about workers with special needs.
  - -- Deliver presentations to civic clubs and service organizations; focus on the capabilities of workers with special needs and their contributions to production.
  - -- Make presentations to groups of individuals who have disabilities and groups of older citizens; emphasize the need for their presence in the work force.

- Form stronger affiliations with rehabilitation agencies.

Make Alliances with Agencies

  - -- Top corporate managers and agency directors should plan for an expanded work force.
  - -- Personnel management and rehabilitation agency staff should form a cooperative relationship. Rehabilitation personnel are resources for finding staff.
  - -- Corporate executives may spend from 1 week to 6 months working in human service agencies, state developmental disability councils, or offices on aging. In this way, they can learn more about rehabilitation agencies, and they can share their expertise.
  - -- Affiliations with organizations such as the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped and the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) should be developed.

Step III

Develop a problem-solving approach to resolve conflicts.

- Teach managers problem-solving techniques.

Brainstorm Possible Solutions

  -- Identify the problem. Define, using specific terms.

  -- Establish criteria for judging alternatives.

  -- Suggest solutions to the problem. Develop as many solutions as possible without regard to feasibility. Use creative brainstorming to develop alternatives.

  -- Discuss alternative solutions based on the criteria. Select one or two solutions that will solve the problem as stated.

  -- Agree on one specific solution.

  -- Outline steps to implement the solution and identify responsible persons.

- Identify possible problem areas:

  -- Flex-time and its implementation.

  -- Communications, for example, when sign language or braille are needed.

  -- Job restructuring or simplification.

Conclusion

The human relations equation serves all employees of an organization. The human relations program promotes the spirit of fairness and cooperation inherent in this process. Individuals with special needs are given opportunities to prove their worth as important members of the work force and the community.

Employers should focus awareness campaigns around relevant issues, such as, job satisfaction, equitable pay, increasingly complex work tasks, and relationships with co-workers. Corporate leaders can play a key role by heightening employers' awareness of this new work force. The challenge to balance the equation can be met by using the community's most natural resource--human relations.

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